

Using Communication and Marketing to Influence “Place” – Introduction

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We've really got some incredible world changing leaders. They are going to share their thoughts with you. I am as eager to hear what they have to say as you are, but I wanted to give just one sort of preface to what they're going to say and that is we've organized this session based on the thinking of two people who couldn't be here with us today. So I've given you their pictures, that's Tom Farley, a Professor at School of Public Health at Tulane and Deborah Cohen who used to be at Tulane and is now at Rand and UCLA. That book there, their book jacket is in white so you kind of lose it in the background, but their book, which was published in December 2005 is called Prescription for a Healthier Nation, for a Healthy Nation, excuse me. I consider it to be the most important book I read in 2005. I continue to carry my copy with me almost everywhere I go. I make all of my students buy, read, and memorize the book. I can't tell you how important I think this book is because it's a complicated world out there, but what they have done with this book is they have simplified and appropriately simplified the attributes of place. The attributes of environment that we know, based on lots and lots of empirical evidence, influence the behavior of people in populations, which as we all know influences the health status of populations. So, in their book they talk about four macro factors - the availability and the price of products and services and Bill Smith is going to share with us his thoughts and his insights about how we can make health promoting, public health products and services more available and perhaps even less expensive so as to help people make opt for the healthier decisions. The second attribute they talk about are the physical structures in our community and there again, this is evidence, lots of evidence that shows we're very sensitive to the attributes of physical structure in our community and when our communities are built with physical structures that support helpful choices, helpful actions on a population basis, we are much more likely to opt for those choices. And we have Ian Thomas from the PedNet Coalition who has done marvelous work in Mississippi in rebuilding the physical infrastructure of his town, of his city so that it supports physical activity, so it supports active living. What did I say? Oh, I'm so sorry. I knew it was Columbia, Missouri and I don't know how Mississippi slipped out. Mississippi wants to emulate him. Mississippi hopefully they're right nipping at your heels to learn everything you have to teach them. The third topic, the third mega attribute of place that Deb and Tom have taught us is important are our social structures. The laws and the policies that we decide to put on the books and whether or not we enforce those policies that sort of work as a pair. My dear friend and long time colleague Lorelei DiSogra who's with United Fresh Produce Association, formerly worked with me at the National Cancer Institute and for those of you who know her know her as the mother of the Five A Day Program. She's going to talk about using communication to influence those social structures and I wouldn't know Keith if I saw him. Keith, are you in the room yet? No, we still don't have our fourth speaker, but I'm sure he'll be coming along. The fourth mega attribute of place that influences population behavior and health outcomes are the cultural and media messages in our environment. I for one and I know a number of you in this room also make the point when you speak to audiences to try to moderate expectations. Communication in and of itself is not a powerful intervention, but the sum total of media and cultural messages in our environment isn't that quite a powerful behavior shaping

force in our lives. So, we have Keith Fenton Miller from the Federal Trade Commission who is working intensively on the marketing of food products to children and the marketing of violent media products, video games and what have you, to children. So, Keith will share with us his perspective and perhaps FDC's perspective on what we can do to try to create a media instead of cultural environments that are more supportive. So, without further adue and I'm actually, I think, I'm not going to give formal introductions, any more formal introductions to any of our speakers, because as I've already said earlier today, we're all family here and if you don't know anybody, well shake their hand and introduce yourself.

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